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## CIA: The Case Builds Up . . . . . Fred J. Cook

The Central Intelligence Agency, came my way. Since then the evidence has been piling up, and the most unsupervised cloak-and-dagger situation can now be discussed reasonably in responsible circles. Yet such is the apathy of our times that even today the self-evident truth that free men cannot assign their political proxies to faceless agents is only imperfectly appreciated.

Our mammoth unregulated and all-purposed agency, was created by President Harry S. Truman in 1947. Its purpose was to gather and assess all possible information about our cold-war enemies. It was supposed not to engage in the "black arts" (the fomenting of revolutions and the overthrow of foreign governments); but, if it did—and a loophole was left open so that it could— it would practice these deeds only on foreign soil.

All of these comfortable suppositions have been exposed by events as fantasies, but the nature of the CIA is such that we should not have needed the evidence of events to detect the illusion. For the CIA, by the very fact of its existence, cuts across the vital lines of power in the American political system and negates the assumptions on which that system operates. Ours is a government of checks and balances, controlled ultimately by the decisions of an informed electorate, but there are no effective checks even on the budget of the CIA and the citizen is powerless to learn what deeds it performs—not in his name, for names are never used—but with his money and with consequences for which he may have to answer.

Three years ago, when in *The Nation* I described this contradiction between our secret agency and our democratic system ("The CIA," June 24, 1961), a rain of brickbats

Two new and excellent books may help to dispel the lingering fantasies. They are *The Invisible Government* by David Wise and Thomas B. Ross (Random House) and *The Bay of Pigs* by Haynes Johnson, containing the personal accounts of four leaders of the Cuban exile brigade (Norton). Both books are by highly capable journalists; both are written with a factual restraint that shuns polemics. But the facts with which they deal are in themselves polemical.

Wise and Ross see the cloak-and-dagger apparatuses we have spawned, with the CIA at the heart of the web, as a complex so powerful as to constitute a government in itself. Is this a feverish exaggeration? Sen. Richard Russell (D., Ga.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, a man who should know, has called the director of CIA the second most important official in American government. And Allen W. Dulles, the most powerful director the CIA ever had, once permitted himself an audible and revealing chuckle in a speech at Yale when he said: "There has never been a time in history . . . when intelligence has had as clear an opportunity to get its view over as it has had in this country in recent years. The Nation's

security Act of 1947, creating the Central Intelligence Agency, has given intelligence a more influential position in our government than intelligence enjoys in any other in the world." (Italics added.)

Wise and Ross put a lot of flesh on the bare bones of Dulles' statement. They draw attention, for example, to the "Special Group" (also known as the "54/12 Group"). Hardly an American outside the higher echelons of government has ever heard of the Special Group, and even Lyndon B. Johnson, Wise and Ross write, was only vaguely aware of its scope and influence until his eyes were opened during a special briefing a few hours after he became President. Operating from the Situation Room in a restricted command post deep in the White House basement, the Special Group brings together the key figures in what Wise and Ross call a \$4 billion-a-year intelligence community. Its dominating figure is the director of CIA, and its other members are usually the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense and a White House liaison man—in the Kennedy regime, McGeorge Bundy.

The supposition that the National Security Council or the U.S. Intelligence Board supervises and controls intelligence activities is a myth. As Haynes Johnson makes clear in *The Bay of Pigs*, the entire course of the Cuban debacle was shaped by the Special Group. Even President Eisenhower was apparently unaware of what was going on. Eisenhower had originally or-

Fred J. Cook's *The FBI Nobody Knows*, expanded from a special issue of *The Nation*, will soon be published by Macmillan.